

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 4/20/2011

GAIN Report Number:

United Kingdom

Post: London

IFE Export Accomplishment Report with Interview.

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Events

CSSF Activity Report

Trade Show Evaluation

Approved By:

Daryl A. Brehm

Prepared By:

Julie Vasquez-Nicholson

Report Highlights:

The International Food Exhibition (IFE) took place in London from March 13 – 16, 2011 and was a great success resulting in \$1.9 Million projected 12 month sales and \$469,000 on-site sales.

General Information:

The UK offers a tremendous amount of opportunities for U.S. agriculture. Today, the United States exports over \$1.6 billion annually in agricultural, fish and forestry products to the UK, which is also a major market for high value and consumer oriented products.

USDA has had a long and successful history with trade shows in the United Kingdom.

The International Food Exhibition (IFE), which is a USDA endorsed show and the UK's largest food trade show, took place at the ExCel exhibition centre in London's Docklands in March. The show targets the food and drink industry across the retail, catering, manufacturing and wholesale sectors.

The exhibit covered 42,000 square meters of floor space and showcased around 1,400 exhibitors.

U.S. food exporters had a significant presence at the show. Nineteen companies exhibited as part of the U.S. Pavilion, which included eleven new-to-market and new-to-export companies. The number of serious contacts made during the show was 353. The show produced \$469,000 on-site sales and \$1.9 million in projected 12-month sales.

U.S. exhibitors introduced 115 new products at IFE, ranging from sauces, crackers, baby food and ice cream. A few U.S. companies were lucky enough to meet with the Olympic Organizing Committee that had a team at the show looking for products to be used at the London Olympics in 2012

FAS/London partnered with the National Association of State Department of Agriculture (NASDA) to pay for improvements to the U.S. Pavilion. FAS/London also sponsored an informal drinks reception at the U.S. Pavilion after show hours for U.S. exhibitors to meet with UK importers. The reception was well attended and was not only enjoyed by all but was also a great networking event.

An Interview with a New-to-Export Company - Slather Brand Foods Inc.

IFE, as well as other trade shows in the UK, help small U.S. firms develop a presence in the UK food market, and for many of these companies, eventually into the European market. These shows also highlight the close and successful partnership between FAS and the State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs).

Robin Rhea is the owner of Slather Brand Foods Inc., a new-to-export company based in Charleston, South Carolina that manufactures sauces. FAS/London interviewed Robin about her experience exhibiting at IFE.

- What FAS programs or services helped with your success?

Trade show and FAS local staff assistance were very helpful. I used MAP funding in order to exhibit at IFE.

- How did you (the exporter) learn of FAS programs and services?

I am a member of the Southern US Trade Association (SUSTA). I heard someone give a talk about the services Susta provided and then I contacted them to set up my membership. It was at that point that I learned about things like the MAP program and discounts on exhibiting at overseas tradeshow.

- What was unique about your accomplishment at IFE?

This gave me a great feel for what to expect when Slather Brand Foods decides to enter the export market. It allowed me to connect with potential exporters and to assess the opportunity for selling my product outside of the US.

- What were some of the lessons you learned from this experience?

Take great notes and be sure to really check out your contacts before doing business with them.

- How does funding from USDA help a company like yours?

Funding is crucial for companies like myself...it would be totally cost prohibitive otherwise.

- How successful was IFE for Slather Brands?

IFE was very successful...Although we are not quite ready to export it provided us invaluable information and contacts when we are ready.

- What are your future plans?

Our next step is to continue to grow our business domestically and position ourselves for export in 2012.

- What advice would you give to other U.S. companies interested in exporting?

There are tremendous opportunities in other countries but research everything and scrutinize the exporters and distributors to make sure it is a good fit. I would also recommend making sure that deals are negotiated in US dollars.

- How important is the UK market for exporting your products?

The UK Market is an excellent market for Slather Brand Foods. There is very little competition to speak of in the sauce category. Moreover, the UK is just coming into its own in terms of BBQ and they are hungry for diversified products. Although our product is not sold as a BBQ sauce and has many other food applications it was perceived as a BBQ sauce and was greatly received. In addition to retail markets there was an overwhelming interest in the Food Service industry and will top our targeted list when we are ready to export. The UK market is definitely ready for Slather Brand Slatherin' Sauce.

